

Hamilton Field, Amphitheater
North Oakwood Drive near East Hospital Drive
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-CP

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
ICP-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD
Amphitheater

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
ICP-

HABS No. CA-2398-CP

Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Amphitheater (east of North Oakwood Drive near east Hospital Drive)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; a: 542100/4213620; 8: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

The stone and concrete amphitheater was constructed as part of the initial base landscaping. Its proximity to the enlisted personnel swimming pool and tennis courts suggests that it was intended to function as part of a recreational group. The classic simplicity of this structure reflects the principles of unity and cohesive design that Nurse sought to establish throughout the base.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

The amphitheater is constructed of terraced stone benches with a surrounding double stone wall that contains trees and landscape shrubs. The wall has openings to allow for entering and exiting the facility. A flat stage area in the front center is located between the amphitheater and a filled-in swimming pool located to the north. During World War II a changing facility was located on this flat area. Total dimensions of the amphitheater are 146 feet at the widest part and 130 feet long. Seating area is 88 feet in length. The second tier from the bottom of the amphitheater has a three-inch diameter bronze plaque laid into the rock with mortar. It is a bench mark and says "Property of the United States//Hamilton Field//NO. ΔELEV //Marin County//California//Q.M.C. U.S. Army." Elevation is not provided.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

**HAMILTON FIELD
Amphitheater**

HABS No. CA-2398-CP Page 2

This semi-circular structure is located against the east slope of Hospital Hill and west of the tennis courts on Escolta Avenue. It was constructed in 1935 by the Constructing Quartermaster's Office and is a part of the landscape and rock retaining wall system installed throughout the base under the planning direction of H. B. Nurse.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

Text prepared by: Mary L. Maniery/Judith Marvin

Title: Historian/Architectural Historian

Affiliation: PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., Sacramento, California

Date prepared: July 1995

Photography prepared by: David De Vries

Affiliation: Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California

Date of photographs: October 1994



Amphitheater

